



Save the Date!

PMEA Annual Finance Workshop – June 8, 2022 (online)

PMEA 2022 Annual Conference – September 7 – 9, 2022 @ Penn Stater, State College

PMEA Announces Training

The PMEA Board of Directors is pleased to announce a partnership with the Northwest Lineman College to provide training for our municipal line crews. Northwest Lineman College (NLC) is an educational institution that provides safety and certification training in the power delivery, natural gas, and telecommunications industries. For more than 25 years, NLC has offered complete solutions from pre-apprentice to advanced training.

For this initial year, all training will be provided free of charge – excluding travel, hotel, and meals (not part of the training package) – to PMEA members. Registration is required for all training courses due to instructor/ participant ratios and will be on a first come, first serve basis. Classes may repeated or class sizes increased based on demand.

Based on a survey and input provided at the 2021 annual conference, the following are the initial training topics for 2022. Additional classes may be added. Registration information for the first course will be available in the near future.

Advanced Transformers

March 15 & 16 - (Eastern PA - Lansdale)
March 22 & 23 - (Western PA - Grove City)

Rubber Glove Safety

May 9 – May 13 - (Eastern PA – Lansdale)
May 16 – May 20 - (Western PA - Grove City)

Crew Leadership

October 4 & 5 - (Eastern PA - Lansdale)
October 11 & 12 - (Western PA - Grove City)

Expansive New Federal Infrastructure Law

By: Sam Wiser, Esq., Salzmann Hughes – Solicitors to PMEA

As many readers are likely aware, on November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (the “IIJA”) into law, which created or reinvigorated numerous programs related primarily to America’s infrastructure. The IIJA provides for grants and other programs for electric vehicle charging, alternative fuels, cybersecurity, environmental remediation, road maintenance and repair, and broadband expansion — to name only a few.

Although the IIJA approves approximately \$1.2 trillion in spending, not all of its programs have actually received appropriations through the IIJA. Also note that specific details about grant applications, eligibility, and timelines are still forthcoming; the U.S. Departments of Energy and Transportation, along with other grantmaking agencies, are anticipated to offer more



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Infrastructure (continued)

information in the future. Nevertheless, below is a brief discussion of a few of the potential grants and programs that have or will receive funding, and which may be of particular interest and benefit to municipal electric utilities.

The **Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program** was established to provide grants and other assistance to eligible entities to protect against, respond to, and recover from cybersecurity threats. Eligible entities under this program include utilities owned by political subdivisions, like municipally owned electric utilities. As is the case with most grants established by the IIJA, grants under this program are awarded on a competitive basis. Numerous factors are considered when awarding a grant, but the IIJA indicates that priority will be given to eligible entities that have limited cybersecurity resources or that own assets critical to the reliability of bulk-power systems. A total of \$250 million — broken down into \$50 million per year for 2022 through 2026 — will be appropriated for the program.

For fiscal years 2022 through 2026, \$350 million has been appropriated for various programs related to **Enhanced Grid Security**. This is not a grant program per se, but rather, the Department of Energy and the Department of Homeland Security will engage with the energy sector and other relevant stakeholders to assess and mitigate vulnerabilities in the electric grid and other utilities.

A program for **Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid** has been allocated \$5 billion from 2022 through 2026. Grants may be provided to eligible entities, including electric grid operators, electricity storage operators or generators, transmission owners/operators, and other relevant entities. The purpose of this program's grants is to reduce risks of fire associated with power lines and to reduce the likelihood of events that disrupt the electric grid due to extreme weather and other natural disasters. Specifically, grant money can be used for weatherization equipment, fire-resistant technology, undergrounding of electrical equipment, utility pole management, and many other related activities.

Units of local government may also be eligible to participate in the **Program Upgrading Our Electric Grid and Ensuring Reliability and Resiliency**, which set aside \$5 billion over fiscal years 2022 to 2026 to establish a competitive grant program. Under this program, local governments and other eligible entities will collaborate with electric sector owners/operators to show "innovative approaches" to enhance the resilience and reliability of transmission, storage, and distribution infrastructure. An additional \$1 billion has been set aside for the Department of Energy to provide financial assistance to rural or remote areas for various purposes, including to improve the cost-effectiveness of energy generation and transmission, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to modernize electric generation facilities. Rural and remote areas are cities, towns, or unincorporated areas that have a population of no more than 10,000 people. Currently, it is not clear what form the financial assistance will take, though grants, loans, or similar types of distributions are likely candidates.

Another competitive grant program called **Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure** will be open to political subdivisions and electric utilities. Grants must generally be used to construct, improve, or acquire "middle-mile infrastructure," such as areas that do not connect directly to end-user locations. The broadband infrastructure can include leased dark fiber, carrier-neutral internet exchange facilities, and many other varieties of similar infrastructure. Priority will be given to projects that use existing rights-of-way and infrastructure to minimize regulatory challenges and projects that connect to unserved schools, libraries, and healthcare facilities. Currently, \$1 billion is appropriated for this program.

Finally, while the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's regulations significantly curtail a municipality's ability to provide broadband service, a municipality is not prohibited from owning broadband infrastructure.

The programs mentioned above represent only a few of the grants and assistance created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that may be of interest to municipalities and municipal electric utilities. While details about the application process for each grant are not yet available, it is expected that the Department of Energy and other relevant departments will provide guidance in the coming months.

Note: For federal grant announcements, visit www.grants.gov. To sign up for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) newsletter, go [here](#).



Federal Infrastructure Law Promises PA New Funding for EV Chargers and Broadband

By: Joseph M. Uliana, Managing Principal, J.M. Uliana & Associates

On November 15th, President Biden signed into law the \$1.2 Trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which included \$550 billion in new funding to rebuild roads and bridges, water infrastructure, broadband and more. This legislation promises significant new funding to all parts of Pennsylvania.

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EV and Broadband (*continued*)

Pennsylvania will receive \$11.3 billion for federal-aid highway programs, \$1.6 billion for bridge replacement and repairs, \$2.8 Billion for Mass Transit and \$355 Million for airports over the next 5 years. This money is in addition to what the Commonwealth was set to receive under the normal appropriations process and will augment existing program funding.

While support for roads, bridges, mass transit and airports are important, this plan also provides funding for two other critical components of 21st century infrastructure: Electric vehicle chargers and broadband deployment.

The IIJA will provide funding to all fifty states to create the first-ever national network of electric vehicle (EV) chargers. Pennsylvania is expected to receive \$171 million to expand its EV charging network. These funds are needed, because EV demand is growing rapidly, and EV owners will need a robust network of charging stations to keep their vehicles on the road.

There is no plan, at this time, on how these funds will be spent. Knowing that all electric issues are important to public power communities, PMEA will keep you informed of developments and let you know the application process for these funds.

The other key, 21st century infrastructure that is funded by the IIJA is broadband deployment. Pennsylvania is expecting to receive about \$100 million initially, with the potential to obtain more funds, to support the connecting all Pennsylvania communities with broadband infrastructure.

The state House, Senate and Governor Wolf have moved quickly to take advantage of this opportunity. In December, they created the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority to put these funds to work in Pennsylvania.

The authority will serve as a single point of contact for parties interested in developing broadband or having broadband developed, helping to minimize duplication and maximize the use of existing infrastructure. Additionally, the authority would be charged with identifying other broadband funding sources and helping to coordinate joint efforts for broadband buildout.

In Pennsylvania, internet connectivity speeds are substantially slower in rural counties than in urban ones because local municipalities cannot afford the cost to purchase and install broadband infrastructure and private sector investment does not extend to equally to rural, suburban, and urban areas. Currently, more than 800,000 Pennsylvanians lack access to robust, reliable, high-speed internet, with more than 520,000 of those residents living in rural areas.

The new, Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority is designed to invest the new federal money to close these gaps. The authority has been given six years to complete its job and then is scheduled to go out of business.

More information on how your community can apply for broadband funding should be available soon.

Over the next five years, the IIJA will provide Pennsylvania with over \$16 Billion in new infrastructure funding to help roads, bridges, mass transit, airports, EV charges and broadband. These funds have the potential to make a significant impact across the Commonwealth and possibly in your community.

Member Retirements and Appointments

PMEA members recently announced staffing changes. In Hatfield, Michael DeFinis – borough manager and Seven Hats Award winner – announced his retirement several months ago and attended his last council meeting in December. Jaime Snyder was appointed to fill the role of Manager after serving as assistant manager since 2014. Snyder is a lifelong resident of Hatfield and is a Certified Borough Official from the PA State Association of Boroughs.



Figure 1 - Mike DeFinis attending his final borough council meeting



Figure 2 - McKenna, Senator Aument, Thompson

Congratulations to all!

In Ephrata, Bob Thompson retired as manager and long-time borough employee. Michael McKenna became the new borough manager; he previously served as manager for the Borough of Myerstown for 6+ years and as economic development manager prior to becoming borough manager. Upon his appointment by Council, McKenna said, "Ephrata Borough is a fantastic place with a rich history." I thank you for this opportunity."



Figure 3 - Hatfield Manager Snyder

Associate Member Spotlight



Professional Computer Solutions, LLC (PCS), a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Service Association (CSA) since Jan 2019, has been serving the utility industry with billing and accounting software solutions since 1981. Powered by over 175 employees serving 160+ companies with more than 120 years of combine service, PCS offers

an integrated suite of premier software applications for the utility industry, along with many smart grid interfaces to open third-party applications. For additional information, please visit <https://pcs-csa.com/>.

We Want to Hear From You

Please share with us your exciting projects and photos for future newsletters. Your submissions should be sent to bosak@papublicpower.org at any time and we will use them in upcoming editions. We also welcome your suggestions for topics of interest for our newsletters.

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